

P. S. Since these Papers were finished, I have read with great Pleasure and Satisfaction a Book of the Reverend Dr. *Edmund Law's*; intitled, *Considerations on the Theory of Religion*. As it came into my Hands too late, to make a proper Use of in this Essay; I can only recommend it to the Perusal of such, as shall desire a complete Knowledge of this Subject. He will there find many of the Facts and Principles, which are here briefly considered, more fully established; and the whole Subject of the *divine Oeconomy*, in regard to the several Revelations given to Mankind, treated with great Learning and Judgment.

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A N
E S S A Y
O N T H E
B E A U T Y
O F T H E
D I V I N E O E C O N O M Y .

B E I N G
The Substance of a SERMON
(With many and large ADDITIONS)

P R E A C H E D
At the Visitation of the Lord Bishop of
WINCHESTER,

Held by the Worshipful and Reverend
Dr. JOHN HOADLY,
Chancellor of the Diocese,

On *Tuesday Sept. 18*, MDCCLIX ;
At the Cathedral Church of *Winchester* :

And Published
At the Desire of Mr. CHANCELLOR and the CLERGY.

By HENRY TAYLOR, M. A.
Rector of *Crawley*, and Vicar of *Portsmouth, Hants.*

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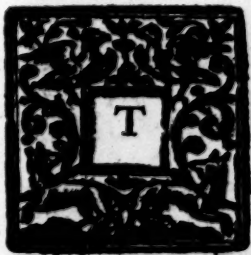


To the REVEREND

Dr. JOHN HOADLY,

Chancellor of the Diocese of
Winchester.

Rev^d. SIR,



H E Approbation,
with which this Dis-
course was received
by Yourself, and the
Clergy at your Visitation; and
your joint Request to see it in
Print; at the same Time en-
couraged me to publish it, and
directed

vi *DEDICATION.*

directed me to put it into Your Protection ; and under Your Name and Patronage to bespeak the Candour of the Public in its behalf.

For Your Easiness of Access, and obliging Treatment of All the Clergy under your Jurisdiction ; Your benevolent and indefatigable Industry in alleviating the Afflictions and Miseries of your Fellow-Creatures ; and that Sincerity and Openness of Temper, with which You treat Mankind ; have deservedly gained You the Love and Esteem of All, who are acquainted with You, or Your Character.

And

DEDICATION. vii

And it is with the greatest Pleasure, that I take this Opportunity of declaring in a public Manner the sincere Respect and Esteem I have always had for You ; as well as of acknowledging the great Obligations I am under, for the many Favours I have received from You ; and in a particular manner for that *Friendship* towards Me, which You have upon all Occasions been ready to express, both by Your Words and Actions. I am,

Reverend SIR,

*Your most obliged, and
Most obedient humble Servant ;*

HENRY TAYLOR,



A N
ESSAY

On the BEAUTY of the DIVINE
OECONOMY, &c.



W H E N we consider the Nature of Man, and compare him with inferior Creatures ; we find his Superiority over them to consist in Wisdom : that is to say, in the Power of directing his Actions, by a consistent and proper Rule and Method, to a desirable End in view.

The Actions of Brutes are detached and unconnected ; but those of Men are dependent on one another, regulated by some Plan, and conducted to particular Ends and Purposes. And the most desirable End that we can possibly propose, next to our own Happiness, is the Happiness of our Fellow-Creatures.

B

Nature

Nature itself assures us of this ; both from our constant Experience, that no one benevolent Action can be performed without an immediate Pleasure and Reward in the Approbation of our own Minds ; and also from that Respect and Deference, which we necessarily pay to the Character of every Person, who is thus employed.

Let us consider that Groupe of Benefactors to Mankind, whom *Virgil* has introduced to our View, as enjoying the Reward of their Virtue in the *Elysian* Fields.

Warriors, who greatly for their Country
bled;
Priests, whose chaste Lives by strictest
Rules were led ;
Bards, whose pure Lore th' inspiring God
express'd ;
Sages, who Life with new Inventions
grac'd ;
All Friends to Man by virtuous Deeds
approv'd,
By grateful Man remember'd and be-
lov'd. (1)

(1) Hic manus ob Patriam pugnando vulnera passi,
Quique Sacerdotes casti dum Vita manebat,
Quique pii Vates & Phœbo digna locuti,
Inventas aut qui vitam excoluere per Artes,
Quique sui memores alios fecere merendo.

VIRG. ÆN. Lib. VI. 660.

No

No one will hesitate a moment, whether he should allow these Worthies the particular Honour and Distinction, which the Poet has allotted them : No one, but will immediately agree to this plain Truth ; that such, as are most ready to promote the Happiness of others, are most worthy of it themselves. The *Poet* therefore copied after Nature, and gives us the general Opinion of Mankind ; for the Nature of Man is precisely the same, in every Age and Country.

If we consult the Heathen *Philosophers*, we shall find the same Notions. *Cicero* introduces his Opinion (which was the common Tenet of the *Stoics*,) with as much solemnity as *Virgil* ; though he does not choose to give it us in his own name, because it was contrary to the Principles of an Academic to assert any thing with that Confidence, which he might be allowed to use under a feigned Character. He speaks in the person of the younger *Scipio*, recounting to his friends an extraordinary Dream of his ; when he made his first Campaign in *Africa*, and was entertained by *Masinissa* King of *Numidia* : In this Dream, his Grandfather *Africanus* seemed to stand before him ; and having first encouraged him to lay aside his fear, (for he saw him struck with terror at the sight of him ;) admonishes him to observe

his Words, and fix them in his Memory:
 “ And that I may provoke and fire you,
 “ says he, with the greater Ardour to pur-
 “ sue the Good of the Community; know
 “ and be assured; that all such as have pre-
 “ served, defended, or benefited their Coun-
 “ try, have a determined Place of Reward
 “ appointed for them in Heaven; where
 “ they shall enjoy a Life of eternal Happi-
 “ ness. For there is nothing upon the
 “ Earth more acceptable to the supreme
 “ God who governs this World, than such
 “ Societies of Men, as are associated by Laws,
 “ and form States and Governments; the
 “ Rulers and Preservers of which came from
 “ Hence, (*i. e.* from Heaven;) and shall re-
 “ turn *Hither* again.”

Here we see the Philosopher entirely agrees with the Poet; that Almighty God will reward with eternal Happiness in a future State such, as have made it the great End of their Lives to be of Use and Service to Mankind; and to promote the Happiness of their Fellow-Creatures. And we cannot help observing; that this same Principle is laid down by our blessed Saviour, as the very Mark and Criterion of a Christian:
 “ A *new* Commandment I give unto you,
 “ that ye love one another; as I have loved
 “ You, that ye also love one another. By
 “ this

“ this shall all Men know, that ye are my
 “ Disciples ; if ye have Love one towards
 “ another.” (1)

If we consider farther, what that Philosopher has advanced with regard to the Nature and Effects of Wisdom ; we shall see Reason to conclude, that the supreme Being himself, in his Government over the World, pursues the same Design, to which he directs the Actions of Mankind ; that his Wisdom, Power, and Goodness are employed to promote the Happiness of his Creatures ; and, (to use the Words of *Socrates* in *Plato's* *Apology*,) “ That the Affairs of a good Man will never be neglected by God ; whether he be alive or dead.”

He tells us, “ there is nothing more divine than Reason ; which in its Perfection is Wisdom.—This is common to God and Man, and is a Law to every reasonable Being ; God and Man being therefore Partakers of the same Law, are to be considered as of one and the same Community : So that the whole World is but one extensive Society, common to God and Man.” (2)

Cicero here uses the very same kind of Language and Sentiment, that the Apostle

(1) John xiii. 34, 35.

(2) Cic. de Leg.

of the Gentiles does ; when he tells us, that “ our Citizenship is in Heaven ; (1) and and that we are “ Fellow-Citizens with the “ Saints, and of the Household of God.” (2) And we can scarce avoid stopping here one moment, to reflect ; that the Improvement of Morality among the Heathens prepared the wisest and best of them, to listen to such Language ; and readily to imbibe the Purity and Sublimity of the Christian Doctrines.

Now if this be really the true State of Things ;—that Wisdom is the Characteristic of a rational Being ; and that this Wisdom directs us to act, by a consistent and proper Rule and Method, to a desirable End ;—and that the most desirable End we can aim at is the Happiness of our Fellow-Creatures : If it be also true—that Reason, which in its Perfection is Wisdom, is a Law to every reasonable Being ; and therefore common to God and Man : we may conclude with Certainty, that the Government of God himself, (the supreme Lord of the Universe, who has no private Views, being eternally happy in himself ;) is directed to the same End ; and tends to the Happiness of all virtuous Beings : and that in a much higher

(1) Phil. iii. 20. (2) Eph. ii. 19.

Degree, than Mankind are capable of promoting the Happiness of one another. For it is impossible to conceive any Thing to be the proper Subject of Praise and Admiration in the Nature of Man, much less to be the highest Perfection he is capable of ; which does not exist infinitely perfect in God. This then appears to be the End, for which God has created all rational Beings ; and to the Accomplishment of which his Wisdom, Power and Goodness are directed, in the Government of them.

And because not only Reason, but even natural Affection, recommends this End to Man ; as the most desirable and praise-worthy : The Scripture also, in condescension to our Capacity, represents Almighty God as affected towards his Creatures in the same Manner ; and declares, that his Benevolence and Love to them surpass even the tenderest of all human Affections. Thus the Prophet *Isaiab* ; “ Sing, O Heavens ; and be joyful, O Earth ; and break forth into singing, O Mountains ; for the Lord hath comforted his People, and will have Mercy upon his afflicted. But *Zion* said, the Lord hath forsaken me ; and my Lord hath forgotten me. Can a Woman forget her sucking Child ; that she should
“ have

“ have Compassion on the Fruit of her
 “ Womb ? yea, They *may* forget ; yet will
 “ I not forget thee ”. (1)

But by what consistent Rule and Method of Providence this most desirable End is to be accomplished, is a Question of great Difficulty. Of this we may be certain ; that a rational Being can never be made happy, unless he be first made virtuous ; the Approbation of his own Mind being absolutely necessary, even to his Ease and Satisfaction. And this Consideration alone will prove it impossible to accomplish the End proposed by any Rule, that will appear consistent to our partial and imperfect Views. For among Beings, who are changeable and inconsistent, the very Consistency of the Design to reform and amend them, the very Rewards and Punishments which are necessary to that Purpose, will create the Appearance of Irregularity and Variation ; for the same Reason the Origin of Evil, the unequal Distribution of Things in this World, the Rise and Fall of Nations, and other Difficulties, appear to our imperfect Views unaccountable and inconsistent ; merely because we are ignorant of the whole Plan of the divine Govern-

(1) Isai. xlix. 14, 15.

ment, and how these several Parts are connected with the general Scheme.

The irregular Appearance of things is therefore no objection to the actual Existence of some regular predestined Design of Providence, to bring about the ultimate Happiness of all good Men; which is now coming on, as it has been from the beginning, and will be to the end of Time.

But, before we procede to investigate this Truth by Facts, and trace out the Beauty of the divine Oeconomy through the several Ages of the World; it will be necessary to shew, that this same Design, which we have already proved by reasoning from Analogy, is confirmed to us by Scripture; for, whatever Probability may arise from the former method of arguing; yet, as the Government of the World depends entirely upon the Will of God himself; the safest and shortest Way of coming at the Truth, is to have recourse to His Declarations.

Now the Scriptures inform us; that the great End, Completion, and Consummation of the Designs of Providence, with regard to the Affairs of Mankind; to which, as to their Maturity and Perfection, all things tend; the chief Point in View, for the Accomplishment of which so many Generations live and die, and so many Nations are raised

up and overthrown ; and in Relation, Connection, and Subservience to which, innumerable Events have been ordained ; was the exalting the MESSIAH with the right Hand of God, to be a Prince and a Saviour : (1) and the erecting and establishing His Kingdom, and bringing all good and virtuous Men to everlasting Happiness in one glorious Society under Christ their Lord and King. For this World was made *by* Him, and *for* Him (2) ; and He was verily ordained, before the Foundation of it (3). This, the Apostle tells us, was “ the *Mystery*, which hath been hid
“ from Ages and Generations ; but is now
“ made manifest to the Saints (4) : This,
“ the *Mystery* of the Will of God, which
“ He hath purposed in Himself ; that, according to (5) the Dispensation of the
“ Fulness of Times (6), he might gather

(1) Acts v. 31—Phil. ii. 39.—(2) Col. i. 16.—Rom. xi. 36—Heb. ii. 10.—Eph. iii. 9.—Heb. i. 2.—

(3) i. Pet. i. 20.—Rom. xvi. 25.—Eph. i. 4, 9.—Tit. i. 2, &c.—(4) Col. i. 26.

(5) Εἰς οικονομίαν but the King's MS. reads καὶ α. Hammond.

(6) Mar. i. 15.—Gal. iv. 4. The Time of the Christian Dispensation is called ἰσχαλαὶ ἡμερῶν, & ἰσχαλοὶ χρόνοι, *last Times*, i Pet. i. 20. —Time of *Reformation*, διορθώσεως. Heb. ix. 9, 10. —Times of *Refreshing*, ἀναψυξεως. Acts iii. 19. —Time of *Restitution* of all Things, ἀποκαταστάσεως πάντων. Acts iii. 21. And the End of it is called συντελεία τε καὶ οὐ, Dan. ix. 27. The *Consummation*.

“ together

“ together in one all things in Christ ; both
 “ which are in Heaven, and which are in
 “ Earth ; even in Him, in whom we also
 “ have obtained an Inheritance.” (1)

But it may be proper more fully to explain this Point from Prophecy and History.
 “ I saw in the Night Vision, says the Prophet *Daniel* ; and behold, one like the
 “ Son of Man came with the Clouds of
 “ Heaven, and came to the Ancient of Days,
 “ and they brought him near before him ;
 “ and there was given him Dominion, and
 “ Glory, and a *Kingdom* ; that all People,
 “ Nations, and Languages should serve him :
 “ his Dominion is an everlasting Dominion,
 “ which shall not pass away ; and his Kingdom
 “ shall not be destroyed.”—(2) And again, after speaking of the four great Monarchies, he adds ; “ And in the Days of
 “ these Kings shall the God of Heaven set
 “ up a *Kingdom*, which shall never be destroyed ; and the Kingdom shall not be
 “ left to other People ; but it shall break in
 “ Pieces, and consume all these Kingdoms ;
 “ and it shall stand for ever (3).” And, according to these Prophecies, we find in the History of the New Testament, that this *Kingdom* is already erected ; that Jesus

(1) Eph. i. 10.—(2) Dan. vii. 13.—(3) Dan. ii. 44.

Christ is appointed the Heir of all Things (1), both Lord and Christ (2), the Lord both of the Dead and Living (3); that God hath given him a *Kingdom* (4), appointed him a Prince and a Saviour, and put all Things into his Hands (5); to give eternal Life (6), to execute Judgment (7), and to reign till he hath put all Things under his Feet (8). And, agreeably hereto, through the whole Preaching of Christ and his Apostles, the great Article which was insisted upon in Christianity, as distinguished from Natural Religion, was the Doctrine of a particular *Kingdom*, under Christ our Lord and *King*.

As soon as Jesus had called his Disciples; the Evangelists inform us, that "he went about all *Galilee*; teaching and preaching the Gospel of the *Kingdom*." And ordered his Disciples to preach, saying, "the *Kingdom* of Heaven is at hand." (9) This was the Subject which he spake of for the forty Days before his Ascension (10). This was the Purport of St. *Paul's* Discourse, when in *Ephesus* for the Space of three months, he disputed and persuaded the

(1) Heb. i. 2.—(2) Acts. ii. 36.—(3) Rom. xiv. 9.
 (4) Luke xxii. 28, 29, 30.—Matt. xv. 2.—Matt. xxvii. 11.—(5) Joh. xiii. 3.—Matt. xxviii. 18.
 Eph. i. 22.—(6) Joh. x. 28.—Rom. vi. 2, 3.—i Joh. i. 25.—(7) Joh. v. 22, 27.—(8) i Cor. xv. 25.—(9) Matt. iv. 23.—Luk. viii. 1. (10) Acts i. 3.

Things concerning the *Kingdom* of God (1). And in this he includes the Whole of his Doctrine ; “ and now, says he, I know ; that “ ye all, among whom I have gone preach- “ ing the *Kingdom* of God, shall see my face “ no more”. (2) This was the Doctrine, which he taught, as the very Characteristic of a Christian, when he came to *Rome* ; “ for when the *Jews* desired to know what “ He thought ; for that they knew, the sect “ of Christians was every where spoken “ against ; they appointed a day to hear “ him : and when they came to his lodg- “ ing, he expounded and testified the *King- “ dom* of God :” (3) persuading them concerning Jesus, from morning to evening. And afterwards, when he left the *Jews* and turned to the *Gentiles* ; “ he dwelt two years “ in his own hired house, and received all “ that came in unto him ; preaching the “ *Kingdom* of God, and teaching those “ things which concerned the Lord Jesus “ Christ.” (4)

The erecting this *Kingdom* appearing thus from Scripture to be the great Design, to which all things are tending from the beginning to the end ; when every thing that

(1) Acts xix. 8.--(2) Acts xx. 25.--(3) Acts xxviii. 23.--- (4) Acts xxviii. 30.

opposes it shall be brought into Subjection to it, (1) and every Thing in it shall be reduced to Order and Rectitude (2), and the *Kingdom* itself shall be delivered up to God, even the Father ; Let us now go on to trace out the Beauty of the divine Oeconomy in Relation to it : and consider,

First, The State of Mankind in general ;

Secondly, The Connections and Consequences, in the Scheme of our Redemption ; and,

Thirdly, The most remarkable Occurrences, through the different Ages of the World.

First, Let us consider the State of Man in general.

It is not in *many* instances, that we are able to see, how the Beginning of things is render'd complete and perfect by the Event : but the general State of Man is revealed to us from the Beginning to the End ; and will therefore discover to us the Beauty of Providence, through the several Periods of his Existence.

Almighty God, when He created Man, encompassed him with Blessings of every kind that he could wish for ; and made his

(1) 1 Cor. xv. 24, &c.

(2) Heb. ix. 9, 10. μέχρι και εν διορθωσει.

Gratitude and Love the fundamental Principles of his Obedience ; and promised to *Adam*, that, as long as he should continue *innocent*, so long his Happiness and Life should be secure under the divine Protection; but, if by *Sin* he should forfeit the divine Favour, he should *die* (1) : as all others have since done.—Here we see the Beauty of the divine Oeconomy ; in joining together Innocence and Life. For what is more reasonable than this ; that whoever does not forfeit Benefits by his bad Conduct, shall continue to enjoy them ? or what can be more deserving of Life, than Innocence ? or more agreeable to the Will of God, when he formed Mankind for a State of mutual Intercourse and Happiness ?—Whatever is *vicious*, is destructive to the well-being of God's Creatures ; and deserves to be itself destroyed : because it contradicts the End

(1) The Case of *Simeon*, till he should see the Lord's Christ ; Luk. ii 6. and of *Hezekiah*, for fifteen Years ; 2 Kings xx. 6. was the same as *Adam's*, during his Innocence. From the Time they were promised Life, the one for fifteen Years, and the other till he should see the Christ, they *could* not die ; because they were under the peculiar Care of Providence. No more could *Adam*, till he sinned. For the Threat, Gen. ii. 17. *If thou eatest thereof, thou shalt surely die* ; includes the Promise of Life, so long as he should forbear eating it.

and

and Design of God in creating. But there can no Reason be given for the Destruction of any thing that is *virtuous*; while there is room for it in the Universe. So naturally does Vice tend to its own Destruction; and Virtue to Immortality (1).—But when *Adam* fell from Innocence, and *Sin* was introduced; the State of Things was so altered, as to render the Introduction of *Death* no less beautiful, in its proper Time; than the Promise of Life itself was, when first vouchsafed as the Reward and Guard of Innocence.—While Innocence was preserved, there was no Use of Death: but as soon as this World was to be divided indifferently between the good and bad; there was nothing in Nature, till the Fear of Death was introduced, that could be capable of curbing the unruly Passions of bad Men: Nothing, but Death itself, that could finish the Oppressions of the powerful Tyrant; and preserve the World from Misery and Confusion.—See then, and contemplate, how beautifully God has constituted Things for general Happiness and Order: Oppression begets Resentment; and Resentment destroys the Oppressor. It is this, that awes the Tyrant; and checks the Villany of private Men. And in short, the

(1) Wisd. i. 13. *For Righteousness is immortal.*

Number of the Virtuous is so small ; that, unless the Fear of Death were their Security, even in the very Hearts of their Enemies ; they could never live in Peace and Safety : but Luxury and Rapine, Lust and Cruelty would reign unrivalled and unmolested. Death prevents these Evils ; so far at least as to preserve a general Order and Happiness : Death then is not an Evil, but a Good ; — good, in its proper Time and Season, like all other Blessings.—When we consider it therefore as a Penalty upon the first Transgression, let us consider it also in this true and grateful Light ; that God would not have suffered it, had it not been necessary for our Happiness. But when Man altered the Nature of his own State, by introducing Sin (1) ; then Death became necessary : that Sin might be restrained, and not become immortal ; and Order and Happiness might be preserved ; though in the presence of Sin itself, the most natural and implacable Enemy to both. And let us also remember ; that, at the last event of things, when the time of our Probation shall be ended, and the good and bad shall be divided into separate States ; then shall Life be again re-

(1) *For God made not Death ; but ungodly Men with their Words and Works called it unto them. Wisd. i. 13, 16.*

stored to Righteousness : and what is virtuous shall commence immortal.—Thus are Life and Death, the greatest Opposites in Nature, wisely adapted to the different Periods of Man's Existence ; according to his different Circumstances : and the Beauty of the divine Oeconomy is herein conspicuous ; because we have the general Design of God reveled to us *from the Beginning to the End.*

In like manner if we consider, in the *second* place, the Connections and Consequences in the Scheme of our Redemption by Jesus Christ ; or, in other Words, if we examine, how this great Design, of rewarding Virtue with Immortality, is to be finally accomplished ; we shall see still more plainly, how beautifully the several Successions of Life, Death, and Immortality, are introduced ; and connected with the grand Design of establishing the Glory and Kingdom of the MESSIAH and the Happiness of his sincere and faithful Subjects.

If we were only to have in view the particular Age, in which our blessed Saviour came into the world ; when perfect Innocence and the most consummate Virtue suffered in the cause of Righteousness and Truth ; we should see no Beauty, nor even glimpse of Rectitude, in such a seemingly
irregular

regular and inconsistent Scheme : But when we extend our view, backward and forward ; when we find, that Mankind was created “ *by* Christ, and *for* him ; ” (1) that he suffered to this End, “ that he might be Lord both of the dead and living ; (2) ” — when we see him, who was “ a little while (3) ” “ lower than the Angels, for the suffering of death crowned with Glory and Honour ; (4) ” — when we read, that it “ became Him, *for* whom are all Things, and “ *by* whom are all Things, in bringing “ many Sons unto Glory, to make the Captain of their Salvation perfect through sufferings ; and being made perfect, to become the Author of Salvation to all them “ that obey him ; (5) — that, for the Joy “ that was set before him, He endured the “ Cross, despising the Shame, and is sat “ down at the right Hand of the Throne of “ God ; (6) — that, because he humbled “ himself, and became obedient to Death, “ even the Death of the Cross, therefore “ God hath highly exalted him ; and given “ him a Name, which is above every “ Name ; that at the (7) Name of JESUS

(1) Eph. iii. 9—Col. i. 16. — (2) Rom. xiv. 9. —
 (3) Heb. ii. 7, 9. *Βραχυ τι.* — (4) Heb. ii. 9.
 (5) Heb. ii. 10. v. 9. — (6) Heb. xii. 2.
 (7) *In the Name* — *ev oνοματι.*

“ every knee should bow, of things in Hea-
 “ ven, and things in the Earth, and things
 “ under the Earth ; and that every Tongue
 “ should confess, that Jesus Christ is Lord ;
 “ to the Glory of God the Father.” (1)—
 When we find all these Connections and
 Consequences ; and the everlasting King-
 dom, prophesied-of by *Daniel*, thus gained
 by his Obedience ; we then descry the
 Beauty of the divine Oeconomy through the
 whole Scheme of his Debasement, Trial,
 and Reward ; we experience the Righte-
 ousness of God clearing itself, in a plain and
 intelligible manner, from the most intricate
 and unaccountable Appearances of suffering
 Excellence, and successful Malice ; and see
 in our Redeemer an Instance of absolute
 Dependence and Faith in God’s Righteous-
 ness, and of a persevering Obedience under
 amazing Difficulties ; and the Infirmary of
 human Nature raised and rewarded by God,
 in his own determinate time, in a State of
 the highest Glory. We see, that God the
 Father, who “ created us by Jesus Christ ;”
 (3) and did determine, “ from before the
 “ World began,” (3) to bring all good Men
 to Happiness by his Administration ; did re-

(1) Phil. ii. 8.---(2) Col. i. 16.---(3) 2 Tim. i. 9.
 Rom. xvi. 25. Eph. iii. 9, 11. Tit. i. 2. 1 Pet. i. 20.
 Rev. xiii. 8. xvii. 8,

ward the Merit of his Obedience, agreeably to this design, by giving him power to raise and judge the dead. And thus Our Life and Happiness are connected with His Power and Glory ; so that, as members of that body, of which He is the head, all his obedient Servants will partake of His inheritance (1) and reward ; “ That, because “ He lives, We shall live also.” (2) Here again we see the Beauty of the divine Oeconomy, by the help of History and Prophecy ; which acquaint us with the general Design of Providence, from the Beginning to the End ; and without which this great and glorious Scheme would continue the same unintelligible mystery, that it was before the Christian Revelation.

Let us now, in the *third* place, take a View of the most remarkable Occurrences in History ; and trace-out the Beauty of the divine Oeconomy through the several Ages of the World.

The most material obstacle necessary to be guarded against for many ages, in order to establish the Kingdom of the MESSIAH, was Idolatry ; If the World had been *totally* corrupted in this respect, there would have been no Prophecies of him preserved,

(1) Eph. i. 11. Col. iii. 24. i Pet. i. 4. (2) Joh. xiv. 19.

no Expectation of him, and no historical Evidence of God's Government and Superintendence over the affairs of Men. This therefore was the chief point, in which the Providence of God strove with the Perverseness of Men, for many generations ; and in this view it is, that we see the Beauty of the divine Oeconomy through the whole History of the *Jewish* Nation ; which was chosen from among the rest of Mankind, in order to preserve and propagate the worship of the true God ; and convey it through the several ages and nations of the World. And therefore, to carry-on, the present inquiry, we need only look into Their History ; and observe their Connections with other Nations, and the Uses they have been made to serve, both in prosperity and adversity ; from the days of *Abraham* till their Dispersion.

Abraham seems to have been an Idolater ; as his Fathers were before him (1) : and was called by God, out of the midst of an idolatrous nation, to the knowledge of the Truth, and into a country, where it was professed ; that God might raise-up in His Family a peculiar People, who might be standing witnesses of his Prophecies, and the

(1) *Jos.* xxiv. 23. *Rom.* iv. 3, 4, 5. *St. Paul* means *Abraham* by *αβραμ* see *Taylor* on the *Romans*, p. 2.

History of his Providence. For this Nation was not selected, and raised-up, on their *own* account ; because God had a peculiar regard to *Them* : (1) (for God regards no man any otherwise, than according to his moral Character;) but he chose them for the general service and benefit of Mankind ; (2) to which purpose he always employed them among the most conspicuous Parts of the World, and intermixed them among the most powerful Nations ; where, by the Religion which they taught, and the Miracles which they performed, they served as a continual Check upon Idolatry.

Melchizedek was, in the days of *Abraham*, King of *Jerusalem*, and Priest of the most high God ; *Abimelek* was King of *Gerar*, in the South Part of *Canaan* ; *Pharaoh* was King of *Egypt* ; and all these were worshippers of the true God ; (3) but, while the *Israelites* were in slavery, both *Egypt* and *Canaan* were corrupted with Idolatry.

For a check to this growing evil, God raised-up *Joseph* ; and sent him before his Brethren, “ to preserve them a posterity in

(1) Deut. ix. 4, 5. (2) Gen. xii. 3. Exod. vii. 5. ix. 16. xv. 14. Deut. iv. 6. i Sam. xvii. 46. i Kings viii. 41. Psalms lxviii. 12, 3. Jer. xxxiii. 9. Hos. ii. 23. Zeph. iii. 20. (3) Gen. xii. xiv. xx.

“ the earth, and to save their lives by a great
 “ deliverance (1). For though they thought
 “ Evil against him, yet God meant it unto
 “ Good ; to bring to pass to save much Peo-
 “ ple alive. (2) The particular Incidents
 in his History, though well worthy of our
 admiration, on account of the many extra-
 ordinary interpositions of Providence ; are of
 too private a Nature, to be here enlarged up-
 on. But about CCL years after his descent
 into *Egypt*, the small Family, which he had
 preserved from famine, was now increased
 into a formidable Nation ; and *Egypt* was at
 that time the Capital of Arts and Sciences ;
 and it was here that God first made use of
 the Posterity of *Abraham*, under *Moses*, to
 withstand the progress of Idolatry against the
 Magicians and their Idol Deities : “ And in-
 “ deed for this very cause, saith the Lord to
 “ *Pharaoh*, have I raised thee up ; to show
 “ in thee my Power ; and that my Name
 “ may be declared throughout all the
 “ Earth.” (3) But when the many Miracles
 which were wrought among them, were
 obstinately resisted ; the beauty of the di-
 vine Oeconomy appeared no less in their Pu-
 nishment, than it had before done in those
 repeted Miracles which had been performed
 in order to reform them.

(1) Gen. xlv. 5, 7. (2) Gen. l. (3) Exod. ix. 16.

As soon as the *Israelites* were delivered from Slavery, “ by a mighty hand and “ stretched out arm, and with great Terri- “ bleness, and with signs and with won- “ ders ;” they were conducted into the Wil- derness, bordering on *Canaan* : where the seven Nations, after the Death of *Melchize- dek*, had left the worship of the true God ; as the *Egyptians* had also done ; and were re- volted to the Gods of the Nations. When *Pharaoh* and his army perished in the Sea, “ they heard it, and were afraid. Sorrow “ took hold of the inhabitants of *Palæstina* ; “ the dukes of *Edom* were amazed ; the “ mighty men of *Moab*, trembling took hold “ of them ; all the inhabitants of *Canaan* “ melted away ; Fear and Dread fell upon “ them (1).” Thus were they introduced to the observation of the *Canaanites* ; and during the XL years that they continued in the Wilderness, it was well known to all the bordering Nations ; that an army of six hundred thousand men, besides women and children, (2) were sustained by the God of Heaven, in a barren Country ; where there was neither meat nor drink for their subsi- stence : But the Lord JEHOVAH fed them with meat from Heaven ; and gave them water from a Rock of Stone.”

(1) Ex. xv. 14. (2) Ex. xii. 37. xxxviii. 26.

Here it was that God first erected this Family into a Kingdom, and was himself their King, and governed them by *temporal* Laws, which were therefore guarded by *temporal* Sanctions. The End of their Separation from the Gentiles was only for a *Time* ; and the Sanctions to secure this Separation were therefore of the same nature. The Laws regarded the government of a *particular* Nation ; and the Sanctions were therefore *particular*. Everlasting Life was not to be appropriated to a particular people ; and was not therefore made the Sanction of those Laws : But the Reward of an everlasting Righteousness, to be bestowed on *all* Beings who should practise it ; without regard to *particular* Nations or Worlds. And in the mean time the temporal Sanctions did by no means supersede the Sanctions of the Laws of Righteousness, written in the Hearts of all reasonable Creatures.

And as soon as the Generation, which had corrupted itself with the Idols of *Egypt*, was deceased ; and a new one was risen-up, which had been always supported by the immediate Hand of God ; he led them against the Idolatrous *Canaanites* : and gave them possession of the Countries, which he had promised to *Abraham* CCCC years before. And God commanded them, saying ; “ Thou shalt drive
“ out all the inhabitants of the Land before
“ Thee

“ Thee, and destroy all their pictures, and
 “ all their molten images, and groves; and
 “ pluck down their high places. — Thou
 “ shalt worship no other God; for the
 “ Lord, whose name is JEHOVAH, is a jea-
 “ lous God. Thou shalt not bow down to
 “ their Gods, nor serve them, nor do after
 “ their works; but thou shalt utterly over-
 “ throw them, and quite break down their
 “ images (1).”

The Nature of these Commands shews plainly; that the Use God then made of the *Israelites* was, to chastise the Idolatry of *Canaan*; and to make known His power and supremacy over all the Earth; as he before declared it to be the design of his miracles in *Egypt*. (2) And the Destruction of these Nations was more particularly severe; because their Idolatry was of the grossest Nature: for they offered up their Enemies in Sacrifice, and even their own Sons and Daughters unto *Molech*. The antient Idolatry of the *Egyptians* (which they received from *Æthiopia*) was the deifying their Kings; but they were not guilty of human Sacrifice (3): This was the particular Abomination of the *Canaanites* (who were driven

(1) Numb. xxxiii. 52. Exod. xxiii. 24, 33. xxiv. 13. (2) Exod. ix. 16. (3) *Newton's Chron.* 202, 206.

into *Egypt* by *Joskua* many ages after), and of their Colonies : and, according to the same superstition, we read, that the *Carthaginians*, who were derived from *Canaan*, when they were at war with the *Sicilians*, in order to appease their Gods, did at one time sacrifice two hundred children of the best houses in *Carthage* ; and three hundred of the Citizens, under a sense of their guilt, (in having saved their own Children, and substituted those of Slaves, or Strangers, in their stead, in their customary Sacrifices to *Saturn* ;) devoted themselves to the Altar (1).

And now the God of *Abraham*, having performed his promise, in giving to his Posterity the land of *Canaan* ; continued to make his Name and Worship farther known, by the great Conquests under their Kings : so that, in the Days of *Solomon*, they were as conspicuous and powerful a Nation, as any in the World ; which plainly appears by their Fleets, their Temple, and their Sacrifices (2). And the Knowledge of the su-

(1) This happened, when *Agathocles* was going to besiege *Carthage*. Diod. Lib. 1. See *Rollin's* ancient Hist. Vol. 1. p. 120.

(2) It appears also from *Solomon's* Alliances : for one of his Wives was daughter of *Hiram* King of *Tyre*.---[*Universal Hist.* Vol. 1. 413, &c.] And another of his Wives was daughter of the King of *Egypt* ; and seems to have been Sister of the great *Sesostris*, the Son of *Jupiter Ammon*. i Kings iii. 1. *Newton's Chron.* 114. 97.

preme God was at the same time extended by their Prophets through all the neighbouring Nations. We have a remarkable instance of this, in the preaching of *Jonah* at *Nineveh*; which was a large City, of above sixty thousand Inhabitants; and he declared, that in forty days it should be destroyed: But they repented of their Iniquities, and proclaimed a public Fast through the whole City; (for the King of *Nineveh* was not yet King of *Assyria*.) “And God saw their works, “that they turned from their evil way; and “God repented of the Evil, that he had said “he would do unto them; and he did it not.”

(1) But, notwithstanding the extraordinary assistance which the *Jews* received from the instruction of their Prophets, and the Authority of their miracles, demanding the greatest attention and regard; it is amazing, how soon and how constantly their Worship was polluted by Idolatry. *Solomon* himself built high places for the worship of *Chemosh* and *Molech* (2); and from the beginning of the two Kingdoms to the end, there was not one of the Kings of *Israel*, who did not encourage the Abominations in *Dan* and

(1) *Jon. ii.*—*Kings v. 18.* and the prophecies relating to *Assyria*, *Media*, *Persia*, *Moab*, *Egypt*, *Edom*, *Tyre*, *Babylon*, &c.

(2) *i Kings xi. 6, 7.* *ii Kings xxiii. 5, 8, 13, 19.*

Bethel;

Bethel; and the high places (1) were never taken-away in *Jerusalem*, except in the reigns of *Hezekiah*, *Manasseh*, and *Josiah*; and some by *Jehosaphat* (2).

At length, when it appeared that the means, which God had used to reform them, proved ineffectual; and their Prosperity became an encouragement to their Idolatry: He stirred-up against them “ the Spirit of
“ *Pul* (3) and his posterity, to be the rod
“ of his anger, and the staff of his Indig-
“ nation; and he sent them against his Peo-
“ ple, to tread them down as the mire;”
and *Samaria* was carried Captive by *Eshar-
don*, King of *Assyria*; and *Jerusalem*, in
CXXX years after, by *Nebuchadnezzar*,
King of *Babylon*. Thus the chosen People
of God were justly punished, in like manner
as the *Egyptians* and *Canaanites* had been;
“ because they transgressed against the God
“ of their Fathers; and went a whoring
“ after the Gods of their people of the Land;
“ whom God had destroyed before them.”

(1) Altars, with little Houses, for eating the Sa-
crifices. *Newton's Chro.* 220.

(2) ii. Chron. xvii. 6, 7. — Kings xxii. 4, 3.—ii
Chron. xx. 33.

(3) This was the beginning of the *Assyrian* Monar-
chy. *Newton's Chron.* 268, 270. *Nimrod's* King-
dom was of small Extent.

And

And here we find ; that the *Jews* were obliged to carry-on, in a state of Servitude at *Babylon*, the same Design of Providence ; which, in their Prosperity and Affluence at *Jerusalem*, they had deserted. For here their Laws and Religion and History became a public spectacle to the Lords of the whole Earth. And, in order to comfort the *Jews* in their affliction, (for Almighty God would not entirely cast them off ;) and at the same time to extend the Glory of God through that vast Monarchy, it is remarkable ; that much clearer Revelations were then given to *Daniel*, relating to the divine Oeconomy, and particularly to the Kingdom of the MESSIAH ; than were ever vouchsafed to the Prophets at *Jerusalem*, in the days of their glory and grandeur.

I have already quoted the words of *Daniel* (1) ; to shew, that the great Design of Providence was to erect and establish the Kingdom of the MESSIAH : The History of the times in which he lived, will discover to us ; that he himself was a chief Instrument in the hand of God to promote it.

The first of *Daniel's* Prophecies was miraculously introduced, by the Interpretation of *Nebuchadnezzar's* Dream ; and the Power

of the Lord JEHOVAH was afterwards so fully manifested, in the Preservation of *Shadrach*, *Mesbach* and *Abednego*; when the King himself, with his Governors, and Captains, had seen these men, together with the Angel of God, walking unhurt in the midst of the Fire; that they were thoroughly convinced, neither *Bel*, nor *Nebo*, nor all the Gods of the Nations, were able to perform such wonders. Then was the Glory of God spread through all the *Babylonian* Provinces, by this remarkable Decree; That “ every people, nation, “ and language, which speak any thing “ amiss against the God of *Shadrach*, *Mesbach*, and *Abednego*, shall be cut in pieces; and their houses shall be made a “ dunghill: because there is no God, that “ can deliver after this sort (1).”

And afterwards, when *Nebuchadnezzar* was recovered from his seven years Madness, which *Daniel* had foretold; and was re-established in his Kingdom—He published a second Decree; “ To all People, Nations, “ and Languages, which dwell in all the “ Earth; Peace be multiplied unto you. I “ thought it good to shew the signs and “ wonders, that the high God hath wrought

(1) Dan. iii. 29.

" toward me. How great are his Signs !
 " how mighty are his Wonders ! His King-
 " dom is an everlasting Kingdom ; and his
 " Dominion from generation to genera-
 " tion (1)." And in these words he ex-
 presses his grateful Sense of the Deliverance
 vouchsafed him, and the Adoration which
 was due to the King of Heaven. " And at
 " the end of the days, I *Nebuchadnezzar* lift
 " up mine Eyes unto Heaven, and mine
 " understanding returned unto me ; and I
 " blessed the most High, and I praised and
 " honoured him that liveth for ever ; whose
 „ Dominion is an everlasting Dominion,
 " and his Kingdom is from generation to
 " generation (2)". Thus the Knowledge
 of the supreme God, and the History of
 his Providence, and the Prophecies of the
 MESSIAH'S Kingdom, were spread abroad,
 by means of the *Jews*, through all the pro-
 vinces of *Babylon* ; and in their state of Sla-
 very they advanced the great designs of Pro-
 vidence, beyond what they had ever done in
 their greatest Prosperity.

Under the second Monarchy of the *Medo-
 Persians*, *Daniel* continued in such Repu-
 tation, and high Honour ; that when, by
 the Envy of the Presidents and Princes, he

(1) Dan. iv. 1, 2, 3.---(2) Dan. iv. 34.

was cast into the den of Lions, *Darius* (1) laboured from the going down of the Sun to deliver him ; and doubted not, but the God, whom he served continually, would preserve him. The Power of the God of *Daniel* was therefore already well known to *Darius* ; and his Worship was to be extended, in this second period of *Daniel's* prophesy, through all the *Medo-Persian* Empire. For no sooner did *Darius* find, that *Daniel* was indeed preserved ; but he sent forth this public Decree——“ To all People, Nations, and Languages, that dwell in all the Earth ; Peace be multiplied unto you. I make a Decree, that in every Dominion of my Kingdom, Men tremble and fear before the God of *Daniel* ; for He is the living God, stedfast for ever ; and His Kingdom that which shall not be destroyed, and His Dominion shall be even unto the end (2)”.

In these Words, and in the former Decrees of *Nebuchadnezzar*, we plainly see a Reference to *Daniel's* prophesy of the four great

(1) The *Darics*, a gold Coin before *Darius Hystaspis* the *Persian*, prove that there was such a King as *Darius* the *Mede* ; though profane History knows nothing of him. He was son of *Cyaxares*, and grandson to *Astyages*, and of the same age with *Cyrus*. *Newton's* Chron. 311. Dan. ix. 1.

(2) Dan. vi. 26.

Monarchies ; and the establishing the Kingdom of the MESSIAH, which was to last for ever (1).

In about two years after the Conquest of *Babylon*, it became subject to *Cyrus* : who had been General to *Darius* ; and having a great Army under his Command, revolted from him, and conquered him. *Isaiah* prophesied of *Cyrus*, by Name, above a hundred years before his Birth ; and foretold his Greatness : “ Thus saith the Lord to his
 “ anointed, to *Cyrus* ; whose right hand I
 “ have holden to subdue Nations before
 “ him : and I will loose the loins of Kings,
 “ to open before him the two-leaved gates ;
 “ and the gates shall not be shut. I will
 “ go before thee, and make the crooked
 “ places straight. I will break in pieces
 “ the gates of brass, and cut in sunder the
 “ bars of iron. And I will give thee the
 “ treasures of darkness, and hidden riches
 “ of secret places ; that thou mayest know,
 “ that I the Lord, which call thee by thy
 “ name, am the God of *Israel*. For *Jacob*
 “ my servant’s sake, and *Israel* mine elect,
 “ I have even called thee by thy name ; I
 “ have surnamed thee, though thou hast
 “ not known me. I am the Lord, and

(1) Dan. vii. 13.

“ there is none else ; there is no God be-
 “ sides me. I girded thee, though thou hast
 “ not known me. That they may know,
 “ from the rising of the Sun, and from the
 “ West, that there is none besides me. I
 “ am the Lord, and there is none else (1).”
 And again ; “ He is My shepherd, and shall
 “ perform all my pleasure ; even saying to
 “ *Jerusalem*, thou shalt be built ; and to
 “ the Temple, thy foundation shall be
 “ laid (2). I have raised him up in righ-
 “ teousness ; and will direct all his ways :
 “ He shall build my City, and shall let go
 “ my Captives, not for price nor reward,
 “ saith the Lord of Hosts (3).”

It was next to an impossibility, that *Cy-
 rus* should be unacquainted with these and
 the rest of the *Jewish* prophecies, which so
 nearly concerned himself and his own Fa-
 mily, [*Nebuchadnezzar* and *Cyaxares* ; his
 Uncles ; and *Darius*, who was his first Cou-
 sin, and probably his Brother-in-law ;] and
 related to the extraordinary Changes, which
 were made in the neighbouring Nations of
 the *Medes*, *Babylonians*, and *Persians*, by the
 destruction of *Nineveh*, and the taking of
Babylon ; both which were accomplished
 within the Memory of many people : for there

(1) *Is.* xlv. 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6. (2) *Is.* xlv. 28.

(3) *Is.* xlv. 13.

were only seventy-two years between them; and most of that time was remarkable for the prophecies of *Daniel*: several of which had been fulfilled, and gained him much honour. The interpretation of *Nebuchadnezzar's* dreams, and foretelling his seven years madness, and restoration to his kingdom; had brought *Daniel* into great favour with that Monarch, through his whole reign; who had published two Decrees, already mentioned, to all Nations, People, and Languages, relating to those prophecies; which *Cyrus* could not be ignorant of: He was then in the Prime of his life; being but thirty-eight years of age, when his Uncle died. And afterwards, when *Daniel* interpreted the hand-writing upon the wall at *Belshazzar's* Feast, (the very night in which *Cyrus* took the City) because an excellent Spirit was in him, he was raised to high Dignity; and continued to enjoy it in the reign of *Cyrus* (1). Besides, it is highly absurd to imagine, that the Prophet *Daniel* could ever think of concealing from Him those prophecies; which God had particularly directed to *Cyrus* himself by Name; and which contained in them a Command from Him to build his Temple, and restore his

(1) Dan. v.

People.

People. It was a Commission from God to *Cyrus*, deposited in the Hands of the *Jews*; which it was Their duty to deliver to Him. And as God had provided, that *Cyrus* should conquer *Babylon*; and be in a Capacity of obeying his Commands: so we may observe also, by the accomplishment of *Daniel's* prophecies, and the high Character in which he appeared; that God had furnished him with proper Credentials to satisfy the mind of *Cyrus*, that the prophecies he shewed him came from God: And, accordingly, *Cyrus* plainly refers to the prophecies of *Isaiab*; in the Proclamation which he published throughout his Kingdom —

“ The Lord God of Heaven saith he,
 “ hath given Me all the Kingdoms of the
 “ Earth; and He hath charged Me to build
 “ him a House at *Jerusalem*, which is in
 “ *Judab*: who is there among you of all
 “ his people? his God be with him; and
 “ let him go up to *Jerusalem*, which is in
 “ *Judab*; and build the House of the Lord
 “ God of *Israel*, (He is the God) which is
 “ in *Jerusalem* (1)”. To this purpose he ordered, that the *Jews* should be assisted in their return with Silver, and Gold, and Goods, and Beasts; and commanded, that

(1) Ezra 1, 2, 3, &c.

the House of the Lord should be built at the expense of the King's House (1); and all the Vessels of the House of the Lord, which *Nebuchadnezzar* had put into the House of his Gods, and which *Belshazzar* had profaned at his Feast (2), should be restored (3).

However, the Enemies of the *Jews* found means to prevent the building of the Temple from being completed, till the second year of *Darius Hystaspis*; who, upon examining into the Records of the Kingdom, found the Decree of *Cyrus*; “ and immediately ordered, that the work should go on; “ and that Money should be allowed out of “ the King's Tribute, for that purpose; and “ that Beasts, and Sacrifices, and other Necessaries should be allotted to the *Jews* “ day by day; according to the appointment of the Priests at *Jerusalem*: That “ they may offer Sacrifices of sweet savours “ unto the God of Heaven; and pray for “ the life of the King, and of his Sons. Also “ I have made a Decree; that whosoever “ shall alter this word, let timber be pulled down from his house, and being set “ up, let him be hanged thereon; and let “ his house be made a dunghill for this. And “ the God, that hath caused his name to

(1) Ez. vi. 4. (2) Dan. v. 3. (3) Ez. vi. 5.

“ dwell

“ dwell there, destroy all Kings and People,
 “ that shall put-to their hand to alter, and
 “ to destroy this house of God which is at
 “ *Jerusalem*: I *Darius* have made a De-
 “ cree; let it be done with speed (1)”.

Here we see, that when the *Jews* were incapable of carrying-on the great designs of Providence by their own Authority and Power; God raised-up Children unto *Abraham*, (if I may so express myself,) from among the Heathens; proclaiming the Name of God through all the Nations of the World; rebuilding their City, and Temple, and reinstating them in their own Land, ready to be again made use of for the service of Mankind in a state of Prosperity.

The *Jews*, being once more settled at *Jerusalem*, were very near a total Massacre through all the other Parts of the *Persian* Empire, by a public Edict in the Reign of *Abasuerus*: But, by the management of *Esther* and *Mordecai*, this mischief was turned against their Enemies; Letters being sent in favour of the *Jews* through the whole Empire, (which consisted at that time of a hundred and twenty-seven Provinces) permitting them to stand upon their defense; and they prevailed against their Enemies,

(1) Ez. 9, 10, 11, 12.

and with the assistance of the King's Officers, slew above seventy five thousand men :
 “ And in every province, and in every city,
 “ whithersoever the King's commandment
 “ and his decree came, the *Jews* had joy,
 “ and gladness, and feast, and a good day :
 “ and many of the people of the land be-
 “ came *Jews* ; for the fear of the *Jews* fell
 “ upon them (1).”—Thus the *Jewish* Na-
 tion was again favoured by the *Gentiles* ;
 and the Knowledge of the supreme God
 spread from *India* to *Ethiopia*.

And if *Abasuerus* was the same King with
Xerxes, (as is the Opinion of *Scaliger* (2)
 and Sir *Isaac Newton* ;) there is no wonder,
 that he shewed so much indulgence to the
Jewish Religion (3). For *Xerxes* was the
 son of *Darius Hystaspis* ; whose Decree to
 build the Temple has been just mentioned.
 This *Darius*, “ *Elmacinus* saith, reformed
 “ the Religion of the *Persians* ; which before
 “ was divided into many Sects : and *Aga-*
 “ *thias*, that he introduced the Religion of
 “ the *Magi* ; changing their ancient sacred
 “ Rites, and bringing-in several opinions”.
 But it may be more proper to say, with Sir

(1) *Esther* viii. 17. (2) de Emend. lib. vi. *New-*
ton's Chron. 363, &c. (3) *Joseph. Ant. Lib.* ix.
 chap. 5.

Isaac Newton ; that “ he seems to have re-
 “ formed the Constitution of the *Magi*,
 “ making his Father *Hystaspes* their Master
 “ or Archimagus (1).” For *Cambyfes*, the
 Son of *Cyrus*, by the small regard he paid
 to the Heathen Gods and Temples, appears
 to have been of that Religion. He pillaged
 and burned all the Temples of *Thebes* (2), or
No-Ammon, in *Ethiopia*, and slew the God
Apis in *Egypt* ; deriding the Priests for their
 Worship, and ordering them to be punished,
 and the Worshippers of it to be slain (3).
 Besides, it cannot be supposed, that the Reli-
 gion of the *Magi* began at that time in *Per-
 sia* ; because the *Smerdis*, whom *Darius*
 slew and succeeded, was himself a Magian ;
 and the day in which he was slain was an
 anniversary day among the *Persians*, which
 they called the Slaughter of the *Magi*. But,
 to return from this Digression ; the Religion
 of the *Magi*, which was taken partly from
 the *Chaldæans*, and partly from the *Brach-
 mans* ; (who are said to be the descendents
 of *Abraham* by *Keturah*) consisted in the
 worship of the One God, without Images :
 and had so great a Resemblance to the Reli-
 gion of the *Jews*, that it was imagined by

(1) *Newton's Chron.* 347. 8, 9. (2) *Diod. Sic.*
 Lib. 1. (3) *Herod. Lib.* 3.

some, the *Jews* were derived from that Sect. (1) and *Xerxes* propagated through the whole empire with great zeal the Religion, which his Father had introduced into it.

This Observation, of the great Agreement between the *Magi* and the *Jews* in the chief Article of divine Worship (2), explains a very extraordinary Action of his; of the same Nature with those already mentioned of *Cambyfes*: (which, in an Heathen Monarch, must appear incredible :) and that is, the Destruction of all the Temples, dedicated to the Heathen Gods, in *Asia Minor*, *Greece*, *Babylon*, and elsewhere through his whole Expedition; and makes it very probable, that the *Magi* did believe and preserve the prophecies of *Daniel*; who was Archimagus, or Master of the *Magi*, in the days of *Nebuchadnezzar* (4): and thereby accounts-for the coming of the *Magi*, from the East, with presents, to *Jerusalem*, at the Expiration of the seventy weeks; saying, "Where is He, that is born King of the *Jews*?
"for we have seen his Star in the East, and
"are come to worship him (5):" And also for that old and constantly received Opinion, said to be contained in the ancient sacerdo-

(1) Diog. Laert. in Procem.—(2) Hide Rel. Vet. Perf. Ch. 31.—Prid. Con. under 479. Cic. de Legg. Lib. 2.

(4) Dan. v. 11.—(5) Matt. ii. 2.

tal books, mentioned by *Suetonius*, (1) *Tacitus* (2) and *Josephus* (3); which prevailed over all the East, at the time of our Saviour's Birth; that, about that Time, somebody from *Judæa* should obtain the Dominion over all. For it was entirely agreeable to the character of the *Magi*, who pretended to prophesy, and a particular intimacy with the supreme Being (4); to lay hold of the opportunity of gaining a Reputation, by espousing *Daniel's* prophecies; and preserving such extraordinary marks of the divine Favour towards the Head of their own Sect.

During this Monarchy of the *Persians*, the Knowledge of the One God was so thoroughly dispersed through the world; as to want no farther prophesy, nor miracle to that purpose. The greatest Man the Heathens ever knew fell a Martyr to it at *Athens*; and the Subjects of Morality were never better treated of, from that time even to the present age; than by *Socrates*, *Plato*, and *Aristotle*. The Translation of the *Pentateuch* into the *Greek Language*, which was made soon after; and the Intercourse, which the *Jews* had with other Nations; were sufficient natural means of propagating this

(1) Vesp. C. iv. (2) An. lib. ii. 21. (3) Lib. ii. ch. 31.

(4) Diog. Laert. in Proœm. ασκειν δε μανικην και προφηταν και αυτοις θεος εμφανιζεσθαι λεγοντας.

Doctrine among the Heathens : and in the mean time, the daily reading their own inspired books in their Synagogues, which was begun after their return from *Babylon* ; and the surfeit of Idolatry, which they had taken in their Captivity ; precluded the necessity of any farther divine interposition among the *Jews* : till a new Truth should be preached—that *JESUS* was the *CHRIST*.

We are now advanced as far as the Monarchy of the *Greeks*. The *Persian* Manners, which appear in so advantageous a light in the days of *Cyrus* (1) ; were greatly corrupted under its later Kings : and the City of *Babylon* so given up to debauchery ; that *Alexander*, by quartering his Army there but one month, had rendered it unfit to pursue his Victories ; had he not been supplied by fresh recruits from *Greece* (2). The Battle of *Arbela* made him Master of all the *Persian* Dominions ; and transferred the Kingdom to the *Greeks*, as *Daniel* had foretold (3).

During

(1) Xenophon. (2) Curt. Lib. v. c.

(3) The Dream of *Alexander* at *Dio* in *Macedonia*, and the Vision of *Jaddua* at *Jerusalem*, together with their Conference, told by *Josephus*, Lib. xi. ch. 8. and quoted by *Prideaux* under the year 331, seems to be a fiction. That *Josephus's* story is false, see *Prideaux* as above : and that *Prideaux's* Account is also false,

During this period, the *Jews* were as conspicuous as ever, under their high priests, princes, and kings ; being involved in the midst of that scene of war and confusion, which lasted so many years between *Alexander's* Captains, and their Successors, through *Europe, Asia, and Africa.*

It was in the reign of *Simon*, the Father of *John Hyrcanus*, that “the *Romans* wrote
 “ in their behalf to the Kings of *Egypt*,
 “ *Pergamus, Cappadocia, Syria, Parthia*,
 “ and all the Cities and States of *Greece*,
 “ lesser *Asia*, and the Isles in alliance with
 “ them ; to let them know, that the *Jews*
 “ were Their Friends ; and that they should
 “ not therefore attempt any thing to their
 “ Damage”. And we find them at this
 time not only very formidable at *Jerusalem* ;
 but also “ dispersed in powerful Colonies
 “ through the World. One hundred thou-
 “ sand at one time, and great numbers af-
 “ terwards, peopled *Alexandria*. Their
 “ numbers were no less in *Lybia*, and *Cy-*
 “ *rene*. *Seleucus* had sent Colonies of them,
 “ to people thirty-four Cities in *Syria* ; and in

false, see the Works of *Walter Moyle*, Esq; Vol. 2. p. 26. particularly his Quotation from the *Alexandrian Chronicle*, that *Jaddua* was dead some Years before *Darius Codomannus*. See also *Newton's Chron.* p. 357.

“ *Antioch*

“ *Antioch* they were almost as numerous, as
 “ at *Alexandria*. Beyond the *Euphrates*,
 “ they had been settled ever since the *Assy-*
 “ *rian*, and *Babylonish* Captivities; and were
 “ greatly multiplied. Nor were they want-
 “ ing in polite Literature; for there were
 “ innumerable Schools erected under the
 “ *Maccabees* (1):” And, in short, every
 thing was now preparing and ripening; which
 was necessary to make this Nation, and the
 affairs of it, particularly taken notice of by
 so great, and polite a people, as the *Romans*
 were in the days of *Augustus*. So that
 whatsoever happened at *Jerusalem*, was as
 well known; as if it had happened at *Rome*
 itself.

The fourth and last Monarchy was now
 rising. The *Grecian* States were subdued
 intirely in *Perseus*, the last King of *Mace-*
don; and the *Roman* Name arrived at its
 utmost glory. *Cæsar*, *Pompey*, and *Crassus*
 divided the World between them; to each
 of whom, and to their armies (which re-
 ceived recruits from all the nations of the
 world) the Peculiarity of the *Jewish* wor-
 ship was well known. *Pompey* had taken
Jerusalem; *Crassus* had plundered the Tem-
 ple; and *Cæsar* had received such assistance

(1) Prid. Conn.

from

from the *Jews*, in his *Alexandrian* wars; that he became a great Friend to them, and got them many Privileges.

In the second Triumvirate, the *Jews* were particularly taken notice of, and favoured. *Antony* introduced them to the Senate; where every thing they desired was granted them: they were permitted to use their ceremonies, and the rites of their country; and to make sacrifices, as their laws required. *Lentulus* also made a decree in their favour; that all such as used the *Jewish* ceremonies at *Ephesus*, should be exempt from warfare; by reason of their Religion (1). And *Augustus* not only permitted them to enjoy their Religion; but established Funds, (as *Darius Hystaspis* had done before) that they might offer a Bull and two Lambs in the Temple every day, for Him and his Family (2).

Thus we see, that the *Jews* were always employed by God, from the Beginning of that People, in the most conspicuous parts of the world, and intermixed amongst the most powerful Nations; where, by the Religion which they professed, and the Miracles they performed, they served as a continual check upon Idolatry; and in the mean

(1) Josephus. (2) Philo Judæus, quoted by *Dacier*, on Hor. Lib. i. Sat. ix.

time,

time, the *Gentiles* themselves protected them in their religious worship of One God, though contrary to their own practice; and thereby promoted the great design of Providence, in preparing the world for the reception of the MESSIAH.

Such was the Credit the *Jews* then had with the Governors of the world; and such their power and numbers; when at the time appointed God Almighty erected the MESSIAH's Kingdom. It was in a time of profound Peace, when men were at leisure to consider and examine things thoroughly; when the Heathens had carried Moral philosophy to a great perfection; when all nations were subdued to the *Romans*, and the *Latin* and *Greek* Languages were an universal conveyance of knowledge through the world; before the Sceptre was departed from *Judah*, and a Lawgiver from between his feet (1); while the Second Temple was standing, to receive a greater Glory than the First (2); and while the Monarchy of the *Romans* flourished (3).

In short, when every thing coincided with the Time specified by the Prophets; and conducted, by the concurrence of innumerable

(1) Gen. xlix. 10.—(2) Hag. ii. 9.—Dan. ii. 44.

circumstances, to render it the fittest time we can conceive, for our SAVIOUR to appear in, and be universally taken notice of; the MESSIAH, so long promised and expected by his own People, was born among them—and rejected. “ He came unto his own; “ and his own received him not: but as “ many as received him, to them gave he “ power (1) to become the sons of God; “ even to them, that believe on his “ Name (2).”

The Fate of the *Jews*, after this Apostasy, will give a great light to the foregoing pages; as it finishes the whole design of Providence, so far as particularly relates to Them; from the time of their Separation from the *Gentiles*, in the days of *Abraham*, till they be again joined in the same Community: and will shew fresh instances of the Beauty of the divine Oeconomy.

It was not without great difficulties, and as many letts and interruptions, that the *Jews* had carried-on the great Scheme and History of Providence so far as they did; though it was for that end they were raised to be a peculiar People. But when this Truth became necessary to be preached, that JESUS

(1) Joh. i. 11, 12. — (2) Margin, *the Right or Privilege*: Εξουσιαν.

was the CHRIST; they were incapable, through Unbelief, of carrying it on any farther; and were therefore succeeded in their peculiarity by those, who believed the Revelation, and undertook that Office; and the *Gentiles* became the Sons of God, as the *Jews* had been before,

In consequence of this, *Jerusalem* was given-up to ruin and desolation, till the Time of the *Gentiles* be fulfilled; and the people were dispersed abroad, separated from the land of Promise, and the essential part of their religious Ceremonies; and became an astonishment, and a proverb, and a by-word in all the nations (1); as their own Prophets had foretold. Yet still they continue to carry-on the great design of Providence, for which they were first chosen; in maintaining and propagating through the Countries, whither they are dispersed, the Unity of God, and the History of his Providence.

The most extraordinary instance of the use these Principles have been of in the world, since the destruction of *Jerusalem*, appears from the wonderful effect they had in converting the *Pagans* from Idolatry; when the *Mahometan* Religion rose, "like the smoke of a furnace (2);" and

(1) Deut. xxviii. 37. (2) Rev. ix.

obscured the *Christian Churches in Asia*. The continual disagreement and disturbances between the Governors of the *Christian Churches in Europe, Asia, and Africa*; the contests with *Pelagians, Semi-Pelagians* (1), *Monothelites, Nestorians, Eutychians*, and others; the division between the Eastern and Western Churches, who mutually excommunicated each other; the Schisms in the Church of *Rome*, and its endeavours to establish a spiritual Tyranny over the lives, fortunes, and consciences of mankind; and the horrible persecutions exercised by *Christians* upon one another, under the pretense of Heresy; “ which contributed very much “ to people *Arabia*; and more yet to weaken Christianity, and render it odious in “ the eastern Countries (2);” gave *Mahomet* an opportunity of becoming the Rod of God’s Indignation against the Corruptions of Christianity: and of making himself great, by introducing a new Religion.

“ The scope of His Sermons was to press “ the Belief of the Unity of God, to exhort “ to the worship and adoration of him, to “ forsake the worship of Idols, and to prac-

(1) *Dupin* calls *Pelagius* an *Englishman*; but seems mistaken: he was a *Welchman*, and his Name was *Morgan*; which is *Welch* for the Sea, in *Greek Pelagos*. *Colomesii Κειμηλια Literaria*.

(2) *Leibnitz’s* Letter.

“rise Moral duties and virtues, together
 “with the observation of certain Heathen
 “and *Jewish* Rites (1).” And in order to
 bring-in the greater Number of ignorant
Jews and *Christians*, he allowed the divine
 Revelation of the *Jews*; and declared, that
 Christ was the last of the *Jewish* Prophets,
 conceived by the Spirit of God, and born of
 a Virgin; and that he worked miracles,
 raised the dead, and did other things record-
 ed by the Evangelists. Yet notwithstanding
 these apparent Concessions in favour of Chri-
 stianity and Judaism, he had an artful Salvo
 for rejecting whatever he pleased, or thought
 unpopular, in either of these Religions; for
 he pretended, that both *Jews* and *Christians*
 had corrupted their own institutions; and
 that He was sent from God, to reform them
 both. Upon this pretended Mission, he
 over-ran the neighbouring countries like a
 flood, and almost extirpated the *Christian*
 Religion out of *Asia*; all those Churches,
 which were once famous and populous Ci-
 ties, being now reduced to lonesome and al-
 most desolate Villages; and the few igno-
 rant and superstitious *Christians* that dwell

(2) The particulars relating to *Mahomet*, &c. are
 taken chiefly from four Treatises concerning the Doc-
 trine of the *Mahometans*, printed at *London*, 1712;
 with a letter from *Leibnitz*.

in them, labouring under the severe Yoke of *Turkish* Government (1).

But let us now consider, what Benefit has arisen from this Evil. It is certain, that
 “ we are obliged to that Sect for the destruc-
 “ tion of *Paganism*, in many parts of the
 “ world; and That would be one degree to
 “ lead people to a more sublime Religion,
 “ that is, Christianity; if it was preached as
 “ it ought; and if the ill-grounded preju-
 “ dices of the *Mahometans* did not lay a
 “ great obstacle in the way (2).” The fun-
 damental Principles of natural and reveled
 Religion; that is, the Unity of God, and
 the divine Mission of *Moses* and of Christ,
 thus mixed with *Jewish* and *Pagan* Cere-
 monies, did, in a few years, establish them-
 selves as religious Truths, through all
 the vast Country of *Arabia*; which “ is
 “ more extensive than *Germany*, *Italy*,
 “ *France*, *Spain*, *Great-Britain* and *Ireland*
 “ together (3).” And three of the most
 potent Empires this day on the face of the
 Earth embrace the same Faith; those of
Turky, *Persia*, and the *Mogul* in *India*.
 Whereas the *Christian* Religion for these
 fifteen hundred years hath scarce made any
 progress in the world at all; and till the Man

(1) *Prid.* Pref. to Life of *Mahomet*. *Pyle* on Rev.

2 *Leibnitz*. (3) *Prideaux*.

of Sin be reveled, the Son of Perdition (1); the *Christian* Church has too powerful an Enemy within itself, ever to expect it. For this hath been the constant Rule of Providence, both in regard to Individuals in the use of Reason, and to Nations in the use of Revelation; that "whosoever hath, to him shall be given, and he shall have more abundance; but whosoever hath not, from him shall be taken away, even that he hath (2)." Thus the *Jews*, when they made the Calf in *Horeb*, were given-up to worship the Host of Heaven (3); the *Heathens*, when they knew God, but worshipped him not as God, were given-up to vile affections (4): and to the *Christians*, who receive not the Love of the Truth, God hath sent strong Delusion; that they should believe a Lie (5). Almighty God, in the Old Testament, laments in a very pathetic manner the obstinacy of the *Jews* in this respect; declaring what good he would have done for them, if they would have hearkened to his voice (6); and so does our blessed Saviour, in the New (7); but

(1) Dr. *Henry More*, and several other eminent Writers prove; that by this Man of Sin is meant the Pope and Clergy of the Church of *Rome*. *Myst. of Iniq.* B. ii. C. 19. ii *Theff.* 3.—(2) *Matt.* xiii. 12.—(3) *Pf.* lxxx. 12.—(4) *Rom.* i.—(5) ii *Theff.* ii. 11.—(6) *Pf.* lxxx. *Deut.* v. 29.—(7) *La.* xiii. 34.

these

these merciful designs were frustrated by their disobedience. So that this is not only the case of Christianity, but of every Revelation which God had given to Man : and succeeding Generations are amazed at the perverseness of their Forefathers ; though equally blind and obstinate in their own Trials.

As to the Revelations given to the Heathens ; they were never established among them, as parts of their Religion ; and being soon neglected, either wore-out by time, or were corrupted into idle Fables (1) ; and became useless, as to that public benefit, for which they were intended. For not one of the Kingdoms, mentioned in Scripture as having made decrees in honour of the *true* God, did, upon that account, forsake the worship of *false* Gods ; or change the established Religion of their Country : but continued to bow themselves in the house of *Rimmon* ; though they addressed themselves to the true God for pardon at the same time. Those, who could see the Truth, were obliged to conceal it ; as the Followers of *Socrates* did, after He had lost his Life, by speaking too

(1) The Story of *Astyages'* dream, in *Justin* ; the oracle to *Cræsus*, in *Herodotus* ; and the prophecy of *Nebuchadnezzar* of a *Persian Mule*, or *Persian Cyrus*, in *Megasthenes* ; may be all accounted for from the prophecies of *Daniel*, *Jeremiah*, and *Isaiah*, xlv. xlvii. xlvii.

freely: and it was the reigning principle of Philosophers, not to make any alteration in the established Religion (1.) For something was wanting, afterwards supplied by Christianity, to persuade men to venture their Lives for the sake of Truth; while the Interests of false Religions interfered with it, and threatened Ruin to such as should dare to promote it: and since the principles of Christianity encouraged men to give-up their lives in defense of it, the consequence has been as bad as the Heathens could ever fear; even the inhuman Massacre of thousands, and ten thousands. This seems to be the reason, that the several revelations given to the Gentiles had so small an effect upon Them, at the time of our SAVIOUR'S Advent; when we might naturally have expected them, after being so many times repeated, to have been of great use in the world.

But yet we must not imagine, because these Truths were not publicly established, that they became entirely useless; as if God had punished Private men for Public negligence: for they were no of less benefit upon that account, to all such as were willing to receive them. Many became *Jews*(2); and,

(1) *Clarke's Boyle. Lect. 29.* Such also was the advice of *Mæcenæ* to *Augustus*, and of *Isocrates* to *Nicocles*.

(2) *Esther viii.*

among those who did not, the belief of the supremacy of God, and other Truths, which they received from Revelation, ceased not to operate in a silent manner, like leaven among meal, unseen and unobserved. The Heathens could not avoid inquiring of the *Jews*, through natural Curiosity; Wherefore are these Rites and Ceremonies? and every answer to that question was an instruction in the knowledge of the true God—How silently and how effectually the Truth may thus operate, we find upon the answer of God to the Complaint of *Elijah*. “ Lord, they have
 “ killed thy Prophets, and digged-down
 “ thine Altars; and I am left alone, and
 “ they seek My life.” But what saith the answer of God unto him? “ I have reserved
 “ to myself seven thousand men; who have
 “ not bowed the knee to *Baal* (1).” It is by this means, that the Heathens, who have written since Christianity, have acquired a clearer view of things, than those who wrote before. For they willingly received the moral Truths of the Gospel, as if they had been the deductions of their own Reason; not considering their divine Original. In the same manner, the principles of Humanity and Toleration operate by degrees among the *English* Papists: and the Deists have adopted

(1) Rom. xi. 4.

many excellent Notions, unknown to the Heathen Philosophers ; and yet have no kind of title to better Capacities, or a greater love of Truth : And we find universally, that men naturally partake of the improvements of those with whom they converse ; both in their knowledge and practise. But, however Truth might make its way by this means, and be propagated in many particulars by the noble principles laid-down in the Heathen Moralists ; the Supremacy of God was always prevented from becoming a doctrine of public and universal Benefit, by the Danger that it would have brought upon the Professors of it.

Now the same Ambition, and worldly Interest, which prevented these Former revelations from being kept-up amongst mankind, and afterwards propagated the religion of *Mahomet* ; have been the lett and hindrance to the Gospel. The Tyranny of *Christians* in power introduced implicate Obedience, and was followed by Ignorance and *Egyptian* Darknefs, and ended in the establishment of Idolatry and Persecution.

So that the worship of Saints or Dæmons, or souls of departed Men, in the *Christian* Church, has even now no material difference from the worship of Demi-gods in the Heathen Temples ; nor the holy Brotherhood in an *Auto de Fé*, from the Priests

of *Saturn* offering human sacrifices in the valley of *Hinnom* (1); and many other Doctrines were established, as parts of the *Christian* Revelation; calculated purely to deceive, impose-upon, and enslave mankind; and advance the riches, power, and pleasures of the *Christian* Priesthood. And this is the State of Christianity, even at this day, among our neighbours; and in which it is attempted to be propagated by the Popish Emissaries. But, instead of reforming Others from Idolatry, they want to be reformed Themselves; which at present seems impracticable: For their Doctrines are so enveloped in Mystery and Darkness; that the Knowledge, which of late years has enlightened the Protestant Churches, has been of no advantage to them; but, like the Pillar which conducted the *Israelites*, leaves *Them* still in darkness (2); and those gorgeous chains of Infallibility, and absolute Authority above all that is called God, or is worshipped; with which the Votaries of that Church thought fit to adorn it in the wantonness of power, to dazzle the eyes of mankind with its magnificence; are now changed to ponderous shackles upon every Doctrine they have established; so that they are unable to remove them, or

(1) ii Ch. xxviii. 3. (2) Rev. 17. 5.

cast them off: and, if the knowledge of the Laity advances, must infallibly at length prove its destruction.

This corruption in the practice and doctrines of Christianity began, in the Apostles' days; and was the Mystery of Iniquity (1), which put a stop to its progress. Nor is it likely ever to recover its ancient lustre; till this Maze be trodden back again, and unravelled; by the introduction of Liberty, Learning, and a Love of Truth (2).

The great and glorious attempt to remove these obstacles seems at present to be the Province and Trial of the Reformed Churches; and particularly, of the Church of *England*—

“ *England*, bound-in with the triumphant Sea, (3)”

seems to be the happy land chosen by Providence to be the Bulwark of the Reformation; a safe retreat from the Tyran-

(1) Thess. ii. 7. Dr. *Lowth's* Visitation Sermon, 1758. That deep System of worldly Policy, founded in the corruption and perversion of all the great principles of the Gospel; that mystery of iniquity, properly enough called Popery; but which might more properly be called Antichristianism; was devised, improved, and brought to perfection—

(2) It is remarkable, in the character *Josephus* gives of CHRIST, that he says, He was a Teacher of those who had a Love to Truth.

(3) *Shakespeare.*

ny of *Rome* ; a land of Learning, and of its parent, Liberty ; which God hath guarded from innumerable dangers for many ages ; and this very year crowned with a course of such happy events, as we could hardly dare to hope-for. It is the part of men, so guarded from the Dangers that attend the search of truth in Other countries, so blessed with Time and Opportunity, so adorned with Learning and the free use of Scripture, to study the word of God with assiduity and faithfulness ; not as though we were already perfect, but searching after farther improvement ; confessing ingenuously, in the true spirit of Protestantism, which disclaims Infallibility ; That, if our Church should in every doctrine it advances “ justify “ itself ; its own mouth would condemn it ; “ and, if it should say, I am Perfect ; it “ would prove it Perverse (1).” It is the Business of its Members, to bring it to perfection by degrees ; as they themselves improve in the knowledge of the Gospel. For the Religion of *Christians*, as the *Mahometans* very judiciously express themselves, is the Religion of a Book ; and by that Book it is to be understood. We are not to wait-for decisions of Popes and Councils, or to be guided by the opi-

(1) Job. ix. 20.

nions of Schoolmen ; but merely to take the sense of Scripture. And if we press on to farther Knowledge and Improvement, and are not grown too wise and politic to amend our errors as we find them, and to separate the Chaff from the Corn : This conduct, carried on with purity of heart and manners, and a love and charity to one another, will be the most rational Thanksgiving to God for his mercies ; and the most likely way, according to all human appearance, of propagating the *Christian* Religion.

But we must not forget to consider, on the other hand ; that the fulness of the *Gentiles*, the call of the *Jews* ; and the whole scheme of *Christianity* in its full perfection, were not designed to be accomplished at our SAVIOUR'S first appearance : But, (to use the words of Sir *Isaac Newton*) “ as the few and
 “ obscure prophecies, concerning CHRIST'S
 “ first coming, were for the setting-up the
 “ *Christian* Religion ; which All nations have
 “ since corrupted ” : (and thereby prevented that Progress of Christianity, which might otherwise have been expected :) “ So the
 “ many and clear prophecies, concerning the
 “ things to be done at CHRIST'S second
 “ coming, are not only for predicting, but
 “ also for effecting a Recovery of the long
 “ lost Truth ; and setting-up a Kingdom,
 “ wherein

“ wherein dwelleth Righteousness (1).” And whatever prophecies were not fulfilled at his first coming, shall be then completed ; particularly, after the *man of Sin* be reveled ; whom the Lord shall consume with the breath of his mouth, and destroy with the brightness of his coming (2) ; and this hindrance to the Gospel be removed ; the worship of One God, and the Kingdom of Righteousness, (which hath been withstood in all Nations) and all prior Revelations, shall at length be firmly established by the power of God, in the final destruction of his enemies (3). Then shall the world enjoy that happy state on earth ; which they might always have enjoyed, had they lived agreeably to the laws of God. “ Mercy and
 “ truth shall meet together ; righteousness
 “ and peace shall kiss each other : Truth
 “ shall spring out of the earth, and righteousness
 “ look down from Heaven (4).
 “ The wolf also shall dwell with the lamb,
 “ and the leopard shall lie-down with the
 “ kid ; and the calf, and the young lion,
 “ and the fatling together ; and a little child
 “ shall lead them. And the cow and the

(1) *Newton* on the Prophecies, 252.—(2) ii Theff. ii. 6. 8. Is. xi. 4.—(3) Joel iii. 2. Rev. xiv. 15, 19, 20. Ezek. xxxvii, xxxviii, xxxix, throughout.—
 (4) Ps. lxxxv. 10, 11.

“ bear shall feed, their young ones shall lie
 “ down together, and the lion shall eat
 “ straw like the ox ; and the sucking child
 “ shall play on the hole of the asp, and the
 “ weaned child shall put his hand on the
 “ cockatrice-den. They shall not hurt nor
 “ destroy, in all my holy mountain.” And
 the reason of this amazing Change in the
 world is explained to us in the following
 words ; “ for the earth shall be full of the
 “ knowledge of the Lord, as the waters
 “ cover the sea (1).”

In the mean time, it does not seem im-
 probable ; that the great designs of Provi-
 dence, to reduce all Nations under CHRIST
 their Lord and King ; and thereby rectify
 all the disorders, that have been introduced
 into the world by Sin ; have been going
 forward for many ages : though by me-
 thods, which have appeared to us the most
 unlikely. The consequences, which may fol-
 low the extraordinary progress of *Moham-
 medism*, may probably reach much farther
 than merely the destruction of Idolatry in
 those extensive Empires already mentioned ;
 and may tend to the building-up that very
 Religion of JESUS CHRIST, which the Im-
 postor, by the propagation of His doctrines,

(1) Is. xi. 7, 8, 9.

was endeavouring to destroy.—As to future events, which are unreveled; they are in the hand of God: But this is undoubtedly the natural consequence of *Mahometan* Principles; the Deference and Respect, with which *Mahomet* hath treated the Revelations given to *Moses* and to CHRIST; and the Reverence, with which he speaks of their Persons in the *Coran* as the Prophets of GOD (1); will lead his followers, to attend to whatever Prophecies shall be hereafter accomplished, or whatever Miracles shall be hereafter wrought, within their knowledge, in favour of these Religions.

There is a circumstance, in the Military law of the *Mahometans*, agreeable to the principles just mentioned; which is very well worth our observation: and that is, the constant rule, in all their conquests, to pay a particular regard to such, as worship the true GOD according to any Book of revelation; as the *Jews* and *Christians* do: not

(1) It is remarked, in *Mahomet's* account of his ascension into the Seven Heavens, and his meeting with *Noah*, *Abraham*, *Joseph*, *Moses*, *John* the Baptist, and JESUS CHRIST; that they All recommend themselves to his Prayers, except the Last; and, when he mentions Him, he says; that he recommended himself to the Prayers of JESUS CHRIST: whereby he certainly acknowledgeth Him to be the greater. (*Life of Mahomet*) 17 ch. of the *Coran*.

forcing

forcing them from their Religion, but allowing them Liberty of Conscience, upon the payment of a Tribute ; whereas no Others are tolerated, but prosecuted with War, till they become *Mahometans* (1). This Custom seems to be alluded-to in the ninth Chapter of the *Revelation* ; where it is said, “ that the “ Locusts had power to Torment, but not “ to Kill ; except only those men, who had “ not the mark of God in their Foreheads : ” For these *Locusts* are interpreted by the Commentators to mean the *Mahometans* (2).

Now all these Principles of the *Mahometans* are plainly introductory to Christianity ; and only want an unbiaſſed examination, to lead them to it. The belief of the Unity naturally promotes Virtue among them ; notwithstanding their Errors and Absurdities, in other notions and ceremonies. The belief of a Revelation in general, and the regard and reverence they pay to CHRIST, pave the way for the belief of Christianity in particular ; when fairly represented to them, strip'd of all human additions and alterations, and examined with a Love of Truth. But, whatever be the real event of things, with regard to these Empires ; we

(1) *Reland de Jure militari Mho mmedanorum*, p.

14. See *Lowman*, as below.

(2) *Lowman* on the Revel. ix. 4, 5.

see the Beauty of the divine Oeconomy at
 lest thus far ; that so many nations are in-
 structed in the Knowledge of the one God,
 and the Practise of moral Virtues.

But farther ; as the Doctrine of the Unity
 of God, and the History of his Providence,
 have been of so much use, in converting the
 Pagans from Idolatry, in all the *Mahometan*
 dominions ; the same principles may be
 no less useful, and necessary to be propagated,
 among the many other idolatrous nations ;
 through which the *Jews* are now dispersed,
 For it is certain ; that the Prophecies, relating
 to the Preservation and Return of the *Jews* ;
 given at a Time, when All the neighbouring
 nations were threaten'd with Destruction ;
 and their continuance, even to this day, in
 a Capacity, nay daily arriving-at a greater ap-
 parent Probability, of returning into their
 own land ; whereas all the nations round
 them are intirely destroyed—must appear to
 all the barbarous countries of the world, if
 ever they come to be so far civilized as to
 consider such subjects ; in the same light in
 which they now do to Us : that is to say, a
 continued Miracle, and an incontestable
 Evidence of the Supremacy of the God of
Israel, and of his Government over Man-
 kind ; and must open their Eyes to farther
 Improvement.

But

But let us consider this Falling-off of the *Jews*, as it more immediately relates to us *Christians*; and the Beauty of the divine Oeconomy, in restoring Them to their ancient state and favour. For, thus saith the Lord, by the Prophet *Jeremiah*; "Hear the word of the Lord, O ye Nations; and declare it in the Isles afar off: and say, He that scattereth *Israel* will gather him, and keep him; as a Shepherd doth his Flock."

(1) And again; "I will bring again the captivity of my people of *Israel*, and they shall build the waste Cities, and inhabit them; and I will plant them upon their land, and they shall no more be pulled out of their land which I have given them; saith the Lord thy God (2)."

It was by Their Unbelief, that We entered into their Privileges. The Revelation, which was first published to the lost sheep of the house of *Israel*, is, by this means, extended to the whole Gentile world. For the Lord says by the Prophet, speaking to the MESSIAH: "It is a light thing, that thou shouldest be my servant; to raise-up the tribes of *Jacob*, and to restore the preserved of *Israel*: I will also give thee for a light to the *Gentiles*, that thou mayest

(1) Jer. xxxi, 10.—(2) Amos ix. 14, 15.

“ be my salvation unto the end of the
 “ earth (1):” And again ; “ And it shall
 “ come to pass, in the last days ; that the
 “ mountain of the Lord’s house shall be
 “ established in the top of the mountains,
 “ and shall be exalted above the hills ; and
 “ all nations shall flow unto it (2).” And
Daniel says, “ the kingdom and dominion,
 “ and the greatness of the kingdom— shall
 “ be given to the people of the Saints of the
 “ most High ; whose Kingdom is an ever-
 “ lasting kingdom, and all Dominions shall
 “ serve and obey Him—(3) And, the na-
 “ tion and kingdom, that will not serve Thee,”
 says the Prophet *Isaiah*, “ shall perish ; yea,
 “ those nations shall be utterly wasted (4).”

All these prophecies remain to be fulfilled ;
 And, when they come to pass, then shall the
 Nation of the *Jews* be reinstated in their
 former privileges and favour. For St. *Paul*
 tells us, that “ Blindness hath happened to
 “ *Israel* [only] in part ; untill the fulness of
 “ the *Gentiles* be come-in.” That, “ when
 “ they shall turn unto the Lord, the veil
 “ shall be taken away from their Hearts.”
 And then, “ through the mercy vouchsafed
 “ to the *Gentiles*, the *Jews* also shall obtain

(1) *Is.* xlix. 6. (2) *Is.* ii. 2. (3) *Dan.* vii. 27.

(4) *Isa.* lv. 12.

“ mercy.

“ mercy. For, if they abide not in un-
 “ belief, they shall be again grafted into
 “ the Olive Tree; for God is able to graft
 “ them in again; and so all *Israel* shall be
 “ saved (1), and become the sons of God;
 “ as they were before.”

Here we may observe an amazing Regularity and Beauty. The *Jews* were first chosen and favoured by God, in a peculiar manner; in order to stop the progress of Idolatry, and enlighten the *Gentiles*; till they became incapable of carrying-on this design any farther, and killed the Prince of Life(2). Did God then cast-away his people? God forbid. No, he turned his favour to the *Gentiles*; “ he was found of Them that
 “ fought him not: and made manifest unto
 “ Them that asked not after him.(3)” That, by the Mercy poured-down upon them, he might recall the *Jews* from their Apostasy; and place them in their own Land, in the same state of Favour they had lost; and thus join together the whole world under one head, JESUS CHRIST; discovering the failings of both *Jews* and *Gentiles*, and making use of Each for the happiness of the Other; that by this means “ he might have

(1) Ro. xi. 25, &c. (2) Acts iii. 15. (3) Rom. x. xi.

“ mercy upon All ;” and the Blessings, promised to *Abraham*, might extend, in His Seed, to all the Families of the Earth. “ For, “ if the Casting-away of the *Jews* was the “ Reconciling of the World ; what shall the “ Receiving of them be, but Life from the “ dead (1) ?” or, (as the same kind of Expression is used and explained by *Ezra*) “ A “ REVIVING, to set-up the house of “ their God, and to repair the desolations “ thereof, and to give them a Wall in *Ju-
dab*, even in *Jerusalem* (2). O the depth “ of the riches both of the Wisdom and “ Knowledge of God ! how unsearchable “ are His Judgments, and His Ways past “ finding out !”

I have now gone through, though in a very imperfect and superficial manner, a regular series of the most remarkable Events that ever happened ; and shewn them to be parts of the great design of Providence, to spread through the world the Knowledge of the Supreme God, and the History of his Government over the affairs of men ; in order to erect and establish, in his own time, the Kingdom of the MESSIAH ; and

(1) Rom. xi. 15. Ζωὴ ἐκ νεκρῶν.

(2) Ezra ix. 9. δυνάμει ἡμῶν ζωοποιήσῃ τοὺς ὀψώσας αὐτοὺς τοὺς οἴκους τοῦ Θεοῦ, &c. Both these Expressions seem to refer to *Ezekiel's* Vision of the dry Bones, ch. xxxii.

bring

bring all good and virtuous Men to everlasting Happiness ; in one glorious Society, under CHRIST their Lord and King.

In the pursuit of this design, we see the works of Providence are directed, from the beginning to the end, by one merciful, comprehensive, regular, and consistent Scheme ; And the establishing Nations, to promote this design ; and destroying them, when their Sins were ripe for Destruction ; and they no longer answered that purpose—and the raising up to public View the Nation of the *Jews*, for the benefit of the *Gentiles*, as a beacon on a hill, to dispense light and truth through *Egypt*, *Canaan*, and the four great Monarchies ;—and, upon the Fall of the *Jews*, the Recovery of them to favour, in their turn, by means of the mercy vouchsafed to the *Gentiles* ;—and so ordering the affairs of both, as to complete the general design for the good and benefit of the whole ;—are parts of the same Scheme ; and their Beauty consists in their being wisely adapted to their several Uses, Times, and Seasons.

If these things are fairly represented, they will furnish us with a lasting Proof of the Truth of Christianity.

Each single Prophecy, with its Accomplishment, in former days, was an Evidence
L of

of God's supreme Government ; and they were all intended so to be. Thus saith the prophet *Isaiab* ; " Remember the former things of old ; for I am God, and there is none else ; I am God, and there is none like me ; declaring the End from the Beginning ; and from ancient times the Things which are not done. I have even from the beginning declared it to Thee ; before it came to pass, I shewed it Thee : lest thou should'st say, mine Idol hath done them, and my graven Image, and my molten Image hath commanded them (1)."

But to Us Christians these Prophecies are not only a proof of God's Providence in general ; but also of the truth of Christianity in particular. And we have one great Advantage over the Ancients, in this respect ; which arises merely from the distance of time in which we live ; and that is, a regular Accomplishment of a long Series of Prophecies ; all tending to the same Event, and divided into distinct periods of Time. This is an Evidence ; which increaseth upon us, the farther distant we are from the giving of the Prophecies ; as the different periods of Time arrive, in which the Prophecies relating to them are fulfilled ; and will of itself

(1) *Is.* xlvi. 9, 10. *xlvi.* 5.

be sufficient to support the truth of Christianity to the End of Time. For every new Accomplishment in this Series will not only be a proof of the particular Prophecy, then accomplished ; but also of the whole connected Series ; And there can be no Time for this Evidence to wear-out ; because the Prophecies reach to the end of the world, and will always be renewed in their full force in every succeeding period by some new Accomplishment. These Reflections encourage us with care and diligence to examine into the many Prophecies, not yet fulfilled ; while at the same time they confirm us in the belief of those, that are already accomplished.

But the chief Consideration among Christians is this ; that these Prophecies, and great Events, are directed to bring-about the eternal Happiness of all good men ; and naturally lead us, if we have any sense of gratitude, to the highest adoration of the supreme Wisdom, Goodness, and Power ; and lay upon us the strongest Obligation to endeavour after all moral Excellence : “ That, when
 “ the Son of Man shall come in the Glory
 “ of his Father, with his mighty Angels,
 “ to be glorified in his Saints, and be admired of all them that believe ; We also
 “ may appear with Him in Glory.

I should also hope ; that these Observations may be of some use to the Deists : That when they consider such plain marks of Providence referred-to in the Scriptures, tending to the Happiness of all good men ; they would reflect, that Christianity is directed to a noble End and Purpose ; and, if it be true, is worthy of all Acceptation : That they would therefore examine the Prophecies themselves, upon which the Truth of it is founded ; For, if even the Facts, that are quoted in these few pages, be true ; all the minute Objections, arising from the disputes and differences among Christians ; all the Difficulties, which procede from our ignorance of languages and customs ; all the Uncertainties of various readings and interpolations ; in short, all Objections that do not attack and overthrow the main Truths and Facts ; will be entirely superseded. Allow them their full force ; nay, all that the objecters would desire ; and they will be found, when compared, and set in the scale against the actual Accomplishment of Prophecy, to be utterly weak and contemptible.

Let the Deists moreover consider ; that the best and greatest men among the Heathens had Hopes, that some such scheme of Providence, as to the general Result, would be established ; and, when they find the
Scrip-

Scriptures declare it to be true in Fact, and discover the Method by which it is to be executed ; let them honestly consider it with the same candour and patience, that they do the sentiments and hopes of *Virgil*, *Cicero*, and *Socrates*, already quoted, relating to the same point. For it is a strange Partiality, to listen to the Arguments of the Heathens ; when they endeavour to prove, that such a scheme *may be* : and yet refuse to examine the Proofs of the Christians, that it actually *is*.

Lastly, let them reflect ; that there is no man's Interest concerned in it, whether they believe or no ; but merely their own : and that, instead of debasing their sentiments, or restraining their liberty, by the Christian yoke ; they will refine their notions, add life and spirit to their hopes, redeem themselves from the slavery of Vice, and raise themselves to Glory, and Honour and Immortality.

The last Reflection I shall indulge, from what has been here advanced, is in regard to Mankind as Individuals.

There are Many, who seem to think they are doing God service ; by depreciating every thing in this World, that is worthy of our Thanks ; and naturally productive of Love, and Gratitude to our Creator ; and representing

senting human Life in such a dismal light, as if the main drift of their Designs were to persuade Men to *Curse God and Die*. They fill weak minds with such gloomy and superstitious Notions of God, as tend to make them unhappy while they live ; and tempt melancholy and violent tempers to the Destruction of Life itself. But the Scripture will relieve us from these Terrors. We shall there find Truth and Comfort ; and see the whole scheme of Providence, from the beginning to the end, to depend upon Benevolence and Love.

If we consider merely the Shortness of human Life, and the busy Vanity, in which Mankind is here employed ; we bewilder ourselves unnecessarily in a scene of inexplicable Difficulty : and have reason to cry out, with the Psalmist ; “ Remember, how
“ short my Time is ; wherefore hast thou
“ made all Men for nought ? ” or, with the wise man ; “ What profit hath a man of all
“ his labour, and of the vexation of his
“ heart, wherein he hath laboured under
“ the Sun ? ”—But, if we raise our view above this World, to that Kingdom, which the Ancient of Days hath delivered to the Son of Man ; which shall never pass away—A Kingdom, into which all good and virtuous men shall arise, and live for ever—

And

And consider, that our State of Trial here will be no longer ; than merely to enable us to form a moral Character, and fit us for a Reward——If we reflect; that, as every generation hath its peculiar business, in relation to the whole ; so every private person hath, in relation to the particular generation in which he lives ; and that his good behaviour in that Station, in which he is placed, will gain him an eternal Inheritance in the Kingdom of JESUS CHRIST; when the whole Design of Providence with regard to this World shall be completed——When a Man beholds all these beautiful Connections plainly declared to us in the Scriptures ; he will then find Joy and Comfort in his Reflections, instead of Gloom and Terror ; his Heart will overflow with Love and Gratitude to his Creator ; and he will make Conclusions very different from what he did, before he enlarged his Views, and raised his Thoughts so high : That he is created for Immortality and Glory ; and though he is now in the first Period of his Existence, where Afflictions may be necessary to correct and improve him ; yet the Progress is already begun, the Path already found and entered, that is to lead him on to Perfection : That human Life, however short, is a noble and inestimable Gift ; and well deserves our Gratitude

tude and Care ; because it serves to carry-on the great Designs of Providence, and bring all good and virtuous Men to eternal Happiness : And, in short, that the supreme Lord and Governor of the World, “ from “ whom every good and perfect Gift cometh “ down, hath made all Things beautiful in “ his Time ;” and governs all Things to great and glorious Purposes. “ I know, saith the “ wise Man ; that, whatever God doeth, it “ shall stand for ever ; nothing can be put “ to it, nor taken from it ; and God doeth “ it, that Men should fear before Him.”

F I N I S.

ERRATA & ADDENDA.

- P. 14. L. 14. *read* World ; subservient to this Design.
 19. — 1. *read* irregular.
 21. — 20. *after* trace-out, *add* in them.
 22. — 14. *dele the Comma after* carry-on.
 29. — 27. *read* ii Kings, v. 18.
 30. — 26. *read* i Kings xxii. 43.
 36. — 20. a Comma only *after* Cyaxares.
 49. — penult. *insert* (3) *before* Dan.
 67. — 24. *for* strip'd *read* stripp'd.
 28. *read* Mohammedanorum.